



A
LETTER

TO

The Rev. Charles Daubeny, L. L. B.

ON K

SOME PASSAGES

CONTAINED IN

HIS GUIDE TO THE CHURCH

AND

His Letter to Mrs. Hannah More.



By a Minister of the Church of England.



• HAZARD •

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A LETTER, &c.

Reverend Sir,

THE motives which prompt this Address to you cannot be personal ones. We are entirely strangers to each other ; and there is no probability of our ever becoming acquainted. You have presented to the world your opinions on some very weighty matters : and as those opinions have casually fallen under my consideration, I see no reason, why I may not present to you my estimation of them, and the ground on which I disapprove them.

“ Had I been honoured with your confidence ” previous to your undertaking your Guide to the Church and your Letter to

Mrs. Hannah More; I should certainly have recommended you, not to write at all. Since you had no friend near you to give you this advice, it remains for me, now that you have written, to endeavour to shew you, that, in some instances, you have written to no purpose, and, in others, to a bad one.

It was with much regret, that I observed you labouring to revive the discussion of certain doctrinal subjects which, though debated, at intervals, during a long series of years, and explored by men of the most eminent talents and laborious research, remain to this hour undetermined: insomuch, that an uniformity of opinion respecting them seems as remote from our attainment and expectation, as when they first became the subject of difference and discussion.

With respect to the doctrines of Predestination and Personal Election, which you, in your Guide to the Church, peremptorily disallow; and which the Church, in her

Guide to you, as peremptorily asserts, I decline entering into any argument; as I really have not the arrogance to believe, that I have the talent of adjusting a controversy, which the ablest divines and the most acute reasoners have not been able to determine. To recommend you or any other writer to forego the agitation of these points, would be an assumption of authority, to which I must be vain indeed to pretend: and I should cherish a hope altogether forlorn, if I expected to be attended to by those, with whom the weighty testimony of experience will not prevail. I may however be permitted to observe, that the Christian world has been divided long enough by disputations on these subjects. The efficacy of argument has been tried to the utmost: and the reasoning of the Guide to the Church, on these doctrines, ranks with a thousand other unavailing labours. To dwell on the article of our Church on these subjects, would be a waste of time; as the Apologist for Brotherly Love has suffici-

ently availed himself of the unguarded condition in which you placed yourself, by publicly contradicting the voice of that Church to which you professed to be a conductor. How you surmount the difficulty which this article throws in your way, as a subscriber to its truth, while you seek to overturn it from its basis, is not my business to surmise. I have no doubt that your view of your own conduct is such as to reconcile it to your conscience: and I would not appear, for a moment, to question the sincerity of your purpose, when you subscribed the articles at your ordination and subsequent induction. The good sense which you have evinced, and the integrity which you have preserved, must prevent you from being suspected of being a sharer in the novel sentiment which has been exultingly, and, of course, unblushingly avowed by some whom I have known, that the articles of our Church are become obsolete, and their authority superceded by, what they denominate, the superior illumination and liberal spirit of more enlightened

times. As I shall have occasion to refer to the articles again, before I conclude ; I beg leave to obviate an objection, not unlikely to be made against what may be deemed the hacknied obtrusion of articles of belief, as authoritative evidences. That they have the force of authoritative evidence to those who have subscribed to them, is a point, which I cannot give up, until my idea of the meaning and purpose of subscription is totally changed : and that the use of them is hacknied, will not be allowed to have weight as an objection, as long as a reference to them is rendered necessary by the discordant opinions of some of the present members of our Church.

In your Guide to the Church, p. 297, you refer to Mr. Wilberforce for the following passage, which you evidently intend should be considered as justly and fairly collected from his Practical View : “ The “ observance of the moral precepts of the “ Gospel, enforced by the awful considera-

“tion, that God will judge every man ac-
“cording to his works,” is “vain wisdom
“and false philosophy.”—Now, Sir, you
must allow me to ask, whether you really
imagined that this gentleman intended to af-
fert, that “the observance of the moral pre-
“cepts of the Gospel, enforced by such an
“awful consideration, was vain wisdom and
“false philosophy?” If you did, the ap-
probation, which in other parts of your work
you have paid to his ability and piety, must
appear to be, in the highest degree, disinge-
nuous: and we are compelled to question
the sincerity of your praise, almost as much
as we do the justness of the censure which
you endeavour to establish on this perversion
of his language. That you designed to mis-
represent him, God forbid I should imagine.
That you have done so, will be evi-
dent to any one who will take the slightest
survey of the entire passage, to which you
refer, as it stands in the original work.
And that you have been culpably careless,
in this instance, is a fact, which I state for
your consideration: and beg leave to add a

recommendation of greater caution in future, lest you should again be guilty of charging upon a writer an opinion, which the whole tenor of his life and writings decidedly and glaringly opposes ; and of which the very proof to which you appeal, affords not a shadow of foundation.

In a succeeding page of your book,* I met with an assertion which not only arrested my attention, but excited my astonishment. You therein declare, concerning principles and practice, "that there are no two things "in the world which, through the deceitfulness of the human heart, are oftener at variance with each other." And you add, "The general language of Scripture agrees with this position." What, Sir! does Scripture countenance this novel doctrine of the very frequent, nay, as you intimate, the *general discordance* of principles and

* 301.

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practice? When the Gospel inculcates *principles of holiness*, is it, *ipso facto*, promoting *unholy practices*? If indeed there is no connection between principles and practice, but, on the contrary, a *prevailing opposition*; on what ground do you labour to disseminate evangelical *principles* among the congregation in which you minister? If this opinion of yours be allowed, it must follow, that you would have provided most effectually for the preservation of the practical unity of the Church, by representing schism as a virtue, and propagating the principles of dissension.

In page 312, you speak of "faith, repentence, and good works through the operation of the Spirit, as the conditions upon which God engages to vouchsafe justification to man." Now, compare this assertion with the beginning of the 12th article of our Church; which declares that good works are the fruits of faith, and *follow after* justification. Either this is wrong, or you are not right. Good works cannot be a *preli-*

minary condition of justification, if justification must take place in order to their very existence as good works. So very clear a case makes argument needless,

On the difference of opinion between yourself and Mr. Wilberforce respecting the preaching of the established Clergy, I purposely withhold my sentiments. As a member of their body, my defence of them might subject me to the obvious charge of partiality; and my censures would expose me to the imputation of invidiousness.*

* In Mr. D's Letter to Mrs. Hannah More he represents her as "thinking that the Clergy of the established Church are negligent in the discharge of their important trust." Mr. D. can best tell, with what view he ascribes to Mrs. H. More this opinion, of which no trace or shadow can be discovered in her writings; which, on the contrary, uniformly display an earnest and deliberate purpose of vindicating and exalting the public character of the established Clergy, and of exciting a general sentiment of respect and esteem for their persons and functions. As I shall have occasion to point out another instance of Mr. D's *creative* imagi-

My reason for taking notice of this part of your work, was, that I might quote from it an observation which cannot be too often repeated: You declare that “the grand object which they (the Clergy) have before them is, so to preach the doctrine of the cross, that no erroneous conclusion may be drawn from it.”—A grand object indeed. An object so important, and demanding such labour, watchfulness, study, and ability; that, if the ministers of the Gospel were all duly aware of the magnitude and difficulty of the work to which they are called; the amusements of the field, the card-table, and the ball-room would never henceforth exhibit a clerical attendant.

Returning once more to the work under consideration, I observe, that *you have quoted the 2d and 4th verses of the 15th chapter

nation; I desire to remind him, that a certain *privilege*, which is generally granted to *Poets*, is not commonly allowed to *Divines*.

of St. John in support of an opinion which you there endeavour to maintain. If it is not an unfair question, I would ask, why you did not take a little notice of the 5th verse of this same chapter. If you overlooked it, it was a pity ; as it is really a very important one : but, if you passed it by, because it threatened to embarrass your plan of interpretation of the other two verses, it was a greater pity still.

As far as I am able to judge the force of words, this 5th verse is a death-blow to the conclusion which you have drawn from the other two verses : and I think the most bigotted supporter of this conclusion of yours must acknowledge, that this 5th verse affords, at least, as much evidence to the opinion which you oppose ; as the 2d and 4th can possibly be made to furnish to the opinion which you maintain.*

* On this subject I wish to subjoin another observation. It appears to me, that the union which Mr.

I cannot close these few detached observations on your Guide to the Church, with-

Daubeny has in contemplation, and considers as exemplified by the parable of the vine, is that visible union which baptism constitutes between the professing disciple and the Christian Church. There are persons, not a few, who consider the union alluded to in this parable, as a real, spiritual, vital union between the soul of the true believer and the person of the Redeemer. To such persons Mr. D's reasonings must appear nugatory.—I take this opportunity of recommending to the consideration of Mr. D. and my readers, the following extract from the writings of a member of our Church; whose pious labours in the promotion of the knowledge of the truth place him far above human praise.

" I take occasion in this place, to correct the *order* in which the Translators of our Testament have placed the words of the second verse of the 15th chapter of St. John's Gospel, which certainly enervates the sense, and is indeed repugnant to the whole testimony of God's word on this important doctrine. The original text they have very properly translated, but a subsequent verse might have taught them, that in the *order* of placing the words they have erred: παν κλημα εν εριο μη φεγον καιρησον &c. The literal translation of which is no doubt as they have rendered it.—*Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, &c.* But when the Lord Jesus in a following verse declares, *He that abideth in me,*

out expressing a hope, that the cultivation of that charity, to which I trust you are no stranger, will, in due time, abate that apparent spirit of intolerance, which some parts of your writings afford reason to impute to you.

and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit ; they ought to have known that there could be no branch really in Christ but what must bring forth fruit. Had they therefore only transposed the words, (and which every critical reader of the original text cannot but know, they might have done without the least violence to the rules of grammar) and placed the pronoun εμοι, with its preposition after the verb φεγον, instead of putting it before it, the sense would have been clear and intelligible, and consonant to the uniform doctrine of Scripture ; for then it would have been, every branch that beareth not fruit in me ; obviously meaning, what all Scripture asserts, and experience proves, that there can be no fruit but in, and from Christ. Without him we can do nothing. From me (as he says by the Prophet) is thy fruit found. Hosea xiv. 8.—And every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Matt. xv. 13.”

The foregoing criticism will be found in an admirable little Tract, on the interesting subject of the Union with Christ, written by Dr. Hawker.

Laying aside, therefore, the Guide to the Church, I take up your Letter to Mrs. Hannah More : and in this latter work, I am reminded of an observation, which occurred to me in reading the former. You object to the sense and extent in which the word faith is used by the authors of the Practical View and the Strictures. Of course, your acceptation of the term, and theirs differ considerably : yet, you persist in combating the reasonings which they apply to faith, in their view of it, by arguments founded upon your view of it. Much labour and time might have been spared to you and your readers, had you considered, that while two persons use a term in a sense widely different, they may reason for ever upon it, and never convince or confute. Indeed, it needed no spirit of divination to have foreseen (what now plainly appears) that after all you could say on this subject, you would leave the point exactly as you found it.

Another leading and comprehensive er-

ror in your Letter, appears, in your treating those passages of the Strictures, which speak of the connection between Christian doctrines and Christian practice, as if Mrs. More intended therein to annex this *practice* to the mere *profession* of those doctrines. If I can at all understand the meaning of words, she certainly designed to speak of the *cordial reception* of these doctrines, whereby they become not simply speculative opinions, floating in the head, or obtruded from the lips; but embraced, because approved *by the heart*: habitually entertained there, and, as it were, naturalized or domesticated. From the uniform tenor of her writings, this truth appears evident: and you are, more than once, compelled to admit its demonstration; although at every other period, from the beginning to the end of your Letter, you appear utterly unconscious of it.

In the protracted strain of argumentation, which extends from the 9th to the 26th page of your Letter, you have written under the

Impression of an erroneous apprehension of the passage which you toil to disprove. Mrs. H. More, speaking of the imperfect and partial views which many persons entertain of the Gospel, observes, that "those who would make Christianity consist of doctrines only, dwell, for instance, on the first eleven chapters of the epistle to the Romans, as containing exclusively the sum and substance of the Gospel. While the mere moralists, who wish to strip Christianity of her lofty and appropriate attributes, delight to dwell on the twelfth chapter, which is a table of duties as exclusively, as if the preceding chapters made no part of Scripture." Now, Sir, you have taken it for granted, that it was the design of the writer of the Scriptures, to set forth this distinction of the parts of the Epistle to the Romans as her own deliberate view of it. That herein you are grievously mistaken, appears palpably on the very face of the quotation yourself have made. The truth, Sir, seems to be this. The distinction which so offends you, has often been

made, with the very view which Mrs. More condemns. From her own words in this passage, and from what I have heard, she has met with instances of this fact: and therefore was led to adduce it, as an example, corroborative of the perversion which she complains of. If her own opinion of the character of the several chapters of this Epistle to the Romans is sought, let it be assumed from her own words. "It is observable (she says) that the earlier parts of most of his Epistles abound in the doctrines of Christianity; while those latter chapters which wind up the subject, exhibit all the duties which grow out of them, as the natural and necessary productions of such a living root." Thus, had you estimated Mrs. M's sentiments by what she professes *in propria persona*, and not according to what she represents as the language of persons, avowedly introduced as partial and mistaken; we should have escaped the unpleasant recurrence, which your book presents, of the words *exclusively* and *logi-*

cal therefore, which are gibbeted in Italics, left the cursory reader, or the dull one, should overlook the force of their frequent repetition.

In page 13 you assert, “that the law of
“works exacting perfect obedience as a title
“to reward, and pronouncing sentence up-
“on the non-performance of that obedience,
“was abrogated; because the parties living
“under it were not in a condition to act up
“to the tenor of it.”* Here, Sir, you set

* Of the general impropriety of giving any reason for the acts of the Divine will, which Divine revelation has not thought fit or needful to disclose, I might remonstrate: but I will only apply the following question to this passage of Mr. D's Letter.—If the non-sufficiency of those who were under the law, was so clearly a reason for its abrogation, that Mr. D. can undertake to vouch for its being so; why were the sanctions and penalties of the moral law of Moses suffered to remain in force 2000 years: And what reason have we to believe, that the Jews were in a better condition “to act up to the tenor of it,” than Christians at the present day?

yourself at issue with no small part of the religious world. To discuss this point to the extent which the comprehensive import of the subject might render necessary, would probably lead me farther, than my leisure, or the patience of my readers, permits these pages to be prolonged.

In bringing forward Grotius to Mrs. More's view, I believe you introduced to her a very old and intimate acquaintance. I was somewhat surprised, that, after quoting the authority of this pious sage, you should be troubled with apprehensions, "that it might not be thought fair to bring forward the authority of a learned commentator on *such an occasion.*" I was going to compliment you on delicacy so very refined; till I discovered in the next sentence that your forbearance was simply prudential; and that you would not use the learned commentator's authority, because "*there was not the least occasion for it.*"

Your speaking so often of the *mere moralist* and of his incompetency to speak of duties that are evangelical, prompts me to recommend to your cognizance a character of which you seem to have little idea. I mean, that not uncommon personage, who, after enriching his mind with that purest system of ethics which the Gospel supplies, rejects the evidence whereby that Gospel is supported, and the doctrines whereby it is distinguished; and then prides himself in the system of morality which he has stolen; and labours to depreciate the comparative excellence of the Gospel, by displaying, as the boon of nature and reason, the riches with which that Gospel has furnished him.—Such men, Sir, exist—They are sometimes called *mere moralists*. If they appear to you any thing better; pray undertake their cause, for I confess I give it up.

To your reiterated assertions, that there is no necessary connexion between Faith and Good Works, I beg leave to oppose the following declaration, which I select from a

very respectable summary of Christian Doctrines, which you and I have solemnly attested the truth of: The twelfth article of our Church teaches, that good works "do " spring out necessarily of a true and lively " Faith."—Here, Sir, you and the Church are manifestly in opposition. If you hesitate to admit this, I have other evidences to the fact; and they are the Homilies of our Church; from which I extract the following passages for your consideration. "Faith is " not without hope and trust in God, nor " without the love of God and of our neighbours, nor without the fear of God, nor " without the desire to hear God's word, " and to follow the same in eschewing evil, " and doing gladly *all good works.**"—Again " As the light cannot be hid, but will shew " forth itself at one place or other: So a " true faith cannot be kept secret, but when " occasion is offered, it will break out and

* First Part of the Homily on Faith.

“ shew itself by good works.”*—Again
 “ This true faith will shew itself, and cannot
 “ long be idle: For as it is written, The
 “ just man doth live by his faith. He ne-
 “ ver sleepeth nor is idle, when he would
 “ wake, and be well occupied. And God
 “ by his Prophet Jeremy saith, That he is a
 “ happy and blessed man, which has faith
 “ and confidence in God. For he is like a
 “ tree set by the water-side, and spreadeth
 “ his roots abroad towards the moisture, and
 “ feareth not heat when it cometh, his leaf
 “ will be green, and will not cease to bring
 “ forth his fruit: even so, faithful men
 “ (putting away all fear of adversity) will
 “ shew forth the fruit of their good works,
 “ as occasion is offered to do them.†—
 Again, Sir, “ Saint Chrysostom saith, Faith
 “ of itself is full of good works: as soon as
 “ a man doth believe, he shall be garnished
 “ with them.”‡—Again “ As soon as a man

* First Part of the Homily on Faith.

† Ibid.

‡ Second Part of the Homily on Faith.

“ hath faith, anon he shall flourish in good
 “ works: for faith *of itself is full of good*
 “ *works.*”*—Such, Sir, is the language of
 the Homilies of our Church. Once more,
 therefore, I repeat, that you and the Church
 are manifestly in opposition; I shall rejoice
 to hear at some future period, of your re-
 conciliation; as it is somewhat distressing, to
 observe an avowed enemy to schism becom-
 ing (doubtless unwittingly) the propagator
 of that worst of all schisms, *a schism in fun-*
damental doctrines. I will only detain this
 subject a moment longer, to add, that when
 you shall find on reference to the articles
 and homilies, that these quotations from
 them are accurate; you cannot but *retract*
 the assertion contained in your Letter to
 Mrs. H. More, that the doctrine of the uni-
 on between Faith and Holiness *is not the*
doctrine of the Church of England.†

* First Part of the Homily on Good Works.

† P. 39.—It would not be amiss if Mr. D. would

In page 45 you maintain "that the position that faith must necessarily produce good works, leaves no middle character between the downright infidel and the perfect Christian."—Now, if faith is a growing principle, which Scripture implies ; and if holiness admits of a progressive advancement, which Scripture and the universal experience of Christians testify ; there may be, and are as many intermediate shades of cha-

follow up this retraction, by an acknowledgment, that the charge of heterodoxy comes home most pointedly to himself. It is a charge, which I think I may without vanity conclude myself to have proved upon him to demonstration. I question whether Mr. D. was aware that he was writing so decidedly in contradiction to the doctrines of the Articles and Homilies. And yet he ought to have been too well acquainted with those doctrines, not to know that he was impeaching their truth. Still however, I cannot but believe, that while he was thus labouring to displace the corner-stone of Mrs. More's arguments, he was unconscious that he was tearing up the foundations of the Church. I will say nothing worse of this matter, than that, in this instance, Mr. Daubeny appears to have met with the fate of John Gilpin, *in going farther then he intended.*

racter between the downright infidel and the perfect Christian, as there are gradations of improvement in faith and holiness. That there is no middle character between believers and unbelievers, strictly speaking, and simply considered as such, is a truth that I not only admit, but would contend for: since every man who is not the one, must be the other. The man who is a believer merely by external profession, and not in spirit and in truth, I rank, without hesitation, with the infidel: and no sound reason, I apprehend, can be shown, why, in determining his *real* character, this classification may not be allowed. Yet, that all believers are undistinguishable, so that they exhibit no variations in the degrees of their piety and holiness, is a position you could never deem admissible by any one; although you would charge this absurd consequence on the doctrine of the connexion of faith and good works.

You appear to apprehend much danger from the doctrine of this connexion; and

fear " it will lull the formal professor of
 " Christianity into a fatal security on a sub-
 " ject of the first importance ; by teaching
 " him to take that for granted which remains
 " to be proved ; and indolently to expect a
 " consequence, which, according to the
 " œconomy of Divine grace, he is himself
 " to become the instrument of promoting."*
 I really see no cause for this alarm. No
 man can suppose, that the bare profession of
 faith, consisting in a declared or implied af-
 sent to the abstract or historical truth of the
 Gospel, is that faith, to which holiness is
 thus annexed. If such an idea could ever
 find admission into the brain of a man, who
 had a second idea to compare it with ; it
 must be speedily expelled again, on the ve-
 ry first observation which he made on the
 world about him ; in which so many lamentable
 and convincing evidences would ob-
 trude themselves upon him, of the separability
 of this sort of faith, and holiness of life.
 But, let the faith, thus coupled with holi-

* P. 45.

ness, be that faith which St. Paul inculcates, and our Church describes; * that which Mr. Wilberforce and Mrs. H. More had in their view; and the danger you fear will be effectually guarded against. For, as this faith is understood, and declared to be an operative influential principle; having its seat in the heart, and not in the head alone; then, holiness may safely be represented as its natural and necessary consequence: for no man can, in this view of it, find any reason to rest secure in an unsanctified frame of reliance on a supposed possession of faith;

* In the third Homily on Salvation, which I recommend to Mr. D's study. If he or any other person objects to the Homilies on account of their antique dress, they are hereby informed, that this valuable body of sound doctrine has been clothed in modern language by the very laudable diligence and judgment of Sir Adam Gordon, Prebendary of Bristol: who by this truly professional and honourable exertion of his talents, has merited the thankful acknowledgment of all true lovers of the primitive purity and simplicity of Christian doctrine. If anonymous gratitude can be acceptable, the writer of this, presents him with a sincere tribute of it.

since he will be driven to question the very existence of such faith, as long as the fruits of holiness remain unproduced in his soul, and undisplayed in his life and conversation.

Allow me, Sir, to state, as a summary of my observations on this matter, that much ambiguity and inapplicable reasoning appear in your pages, from your treating the subject of Christian Faith, without taking any thing more into the account, than the character of faith, as an abstract act of the understanding.* Those, therefore, who have collected a more concrete notion of it, from the representations of Scripture concerning its nature and operations, may well be expected to meet with your opposition. I cannot help adding, that in your representation of the doctrine of justification, you by no means bring forward into a due prominence of station, that primary cause of justification, the gracious imputation of the

* The Homily on Faith expressly declares that
“this is not properly called Faith.”

meritorious obedience and death of the Redeemer to the believer, for that purpose.

There is a passage in this Letter, towards its conclusion * which I cannot but deem contradictory to the tenor of the preceding part of it; and which is certainly in opposition to an assertion already quoted from your Guide to the Church. You say, concerning the genuine spirit of Christianity
 “ *it certainly cannot exist, independent of its practical effects.*” Let this sentence be contrasted with many passages that precede and follow it; and more especially with your own declaration, that “ *there are no two things in the world which are oftener at variance with each other, than principles and practice;*” and what then will become of your consistency?

You say, “ Faith in Christ will certainly be productive of the fruits of Christianity, when the professor has not been wanting

* P. 51.

“ to himself in the diligent and faithful use
“ of the means that have been instituted for
“ that purpose.” * According to this, the
fertility of faith depends upon the “ profes-
“ for not being wanting to himself.” God
forbid that this should be the *entire* depen-
dence of our fruitfulness in holiness. This
(to use your figure of speech) is not only to
rest good works upon one leg, but upon a
lame leg also. The necessity of human en-
deavours, and a diligent use of means, I
would earnestly contend for: but I should
be very much afraid to rest so very much
upon them, as the import of this passage
amounts to. I, moreover, insist, that faith
derives its vitality and energy from no low-
er source than him who is the glorious ob-
ject of it: and that faith contributes to enliv-
en devotional exercises, instead of depend-
ing upon the perfection of these exercises
for its operation. Taking it for granted, that
“ it is no uncommon thing for ignorant
“ Christians to expect the fruits of Divine

"Grace, without making use of the means
"of it;" I heartily close with your appreci-
ation of such conduct: although I had rather
you could have found some other word to
express your reprobation of this perversion
and folly, than that of "enthusiasm:" a
term distorted from its original meaning by
popular use; and still subjected to senses so
various, that even its popular acceptation
remains somewhat vague and indefinite.

I cannot suppress an emotion of regret,
on tracing the passage, wherein you speak
of persons entertaining, what you term
"that *most erroneous idea*, that the good
"work of faith which the grace of God had
"begun in them, would not be left uncom-
"pleted."* That this idea, like many
other very good and very true ideas beside,
has been sometimes abused, I dare not ques-
tion. But that it is in itself a *most erroneous*
idea, I dare not affirm, because I cannot
believe it; unless it should be proved, which

* P. 52.

never yet was suspected, that the sixth verse of the first chapter of the Epistle to the Philippians is an interpolation. The Apostle therein, having informed the Philippian Converts of his thanksgiving and prayers on their behalf, adds, "Being confident of this "very thing, that he which hath begun a "good work in you, will perform it until "the day of Jesus Christ."

I have reason to believe, that the idea which you term most erroneous, has been both necessary to the support, and effectual to the encouragement of many a sincere and devout Christian in seasons of trial and trouble; when a sense of indwelling infirmity, and the struggles of remaining corruptions against the renewing operations of the Holy Ghost within them, have rendered this, and similar declarations of the faithfulness of God to his children, unspeakably precious to their souls. God forbid that we should tear away from an humble self distrusting Christian, one of the props that sustain his hopes: for these hopes are all needful to animate his

fortitude in the spiritual conflict in which he is engaged. I may, and do desire most earnestly to lead such a man to examine his foundations; but, for worlds, I would not overturn them.

I could have wished to close this Letter, without giving scope to any feelings which are incompatible with that sentiment of good will, which, on the general subjects of this address, I have endeavoured to preserve. It is with some pain, that I yield to the necessity which my duty imposes, of bringing forward a passage of your Letter characteristic of an unpardonable facility in hazarding assertions highly injurious and offensive, yet utterly unsubstantiated by argument or proof. I mean that passage contained in your forty-sixth page, which asserts, that "the gross doctrine of faith without works, "and the more plausible one of faith, considered as necessarily productive of them, "will be found to differ only in the direct "and indirect promotion of the same fatal

"effects."—Much labour, surely, should have been employed in examining an assertion like this, before you suffered it to occupy a page in a work designed for publication. Some there have been among the pious, and the learned too, who would have deliberated long and deeply,* ere they would venture to publish a charge of such serious and alarming import, as the one which you have here created †, and consigned to notoriety, without even hesitation enough to allow you leisure for offering one

* Especially, if for *one page* of a work, which *seemed* to countenance their conclusion; they found *six hundred*, of a tendency diametrically opposite.

† I use the word *created* in its strict sense. Mr. D. has not framed this accusation out of *pre-existent materials*. In conformity to the usages of certain practitioners in another way, he may affix to this charge a label, importing that he is the original inventor of it; and interdicting any infraction on his right to the credit and advantage of it. He need not sue for a Patent, as he may rest secure of the sole manufacture and disposal of this article.

tolerable argument to support it. But, Sir, I forbear to prolong remonstrances on a subject unpleasant in itself, and discreditable to you: especially, since it admits of this very summary termination. If this doctrine is really a source of Antinomianism, let the Article and the Homilies of our Church, already appealed to, furnish an answer to the charge. On them fix your objections: and the friends of that Church, though they may not be qualified to act as her Guides, will yet be found ready and able to defend the purity and excellence of her tenets; and also to vindicate the orthodoxy of those, who, though not Presbyters of this Church, are nevertheless her faithful and useful friends; and evidence their attachment to her, not only by preserving the tie of external and visible communion, but also by cordially maintaining her doctrines, and acknowledging her authority.

It is an incontrovertible fact, that while Mrs. H. More is charged by you, on the

one hand, with promoting the prevalence of Antinomianism; she is, on the other hand, represented by several persons, as insisting so strongly and repeatedly on the necessity of good works, that, according to their views, she has given a tincture of legalism to her summary of evangelical doctrines. On considering this circumstance, we are reminded of the picture which was exposed in the market-place by the painter, in order that the passing spectators might, each, according to his taste, point out the faults of it, by touching them with a brush dipt in some colour. The poor painter soon found his canvas entirely covered with these liberal criticisms; and instead of its exhibiting any longer the genius and labours of his pencil, nothing was to be seen but the obliterations of the connoisseurs.

Painters, and authors too, in all ages, have had frequent opportunities of sympathizing with this unfortunate artist.*

* That I may not too much interrupt the general bu-

The circumstance which led me to adduce the foregoing little narrative, recalls to my recollection another tale, of equal antiquity, and even more to the point. I mean that, in which the Grecian fabulist represents a poor man who had two wives, one of whom

sines of my Letter, I would throw into a note, an observation which long ago occurred to me, and which the above subject has revived. About forty years since, it was strenuously debated, whether our excellent Liturgy should undergo a revisal and alteration. It appeared, that if all the objections to it were admitted, and the proposed emendations allowed, not a line of it would have remained unchanged. I verily am persuaded, that if the Holy Scriptures themselves were submitted to the correction of all who think they could improve them, they would share a similar fate. We should have Socinian, Arian, Pelagian, and other connoisseurs, dipping their critical brushes in that gall of bitterness, the pride of opinion ; and the harmonious features of the Bible would be distorted into a thousand forms, and exhibit no longer any traces of the divine original.—If the connoisseurs just mentioned should ever be embodied into a regular society, Dr. Geddes might depend upon the presidency.

indulged her taste, in pulling out all the white hairs on his head; while the other amused her fancy, by rooting up all the black ones.—Whether you are a mathematician or not, you will be able in this instance to exercise your judgment on parallelisms.

To these remarks on the foregoing select passages of your writings, I beg leave to subjoin the following observations, which apply generally to your objections to the Practical View by Mr. Wilberforce, and the Strictures by Mrs. H. More. I cannot but notice, that the works which have set your pen in exercise, and on which you have fastened your animadversions, are two of the most celebrated, best intentioned, and most useful publications of the present age. I have heard of a superstition, prevalent among certain Tartar tribes, which teaches their warriors to believe, that the heroic qualities and other virtues of those who are killed in combat, are conveyed to the conquerors. Whether such a process

takes place in the opposition of literary champions, I feel a little inclined to question. But if such a transfusion had been possible; you could scarcely have made choice of antagonists, from the prospect of whose defeat you could have anticipated a richer acquisition, than that which the objects of your attacks are capable of affording.

If you really hoped to settle the differences which divide the religious world, and which constitute the opposition of doctrines discussed in your Letters; you have been misled by a vanity, which cannot too soon be cured. If this was not your expectation, you have done worse than wasted your labours; for you have directed them to the public impeachment of works confessedly excellent and useful: whose beneficial operation you have done all in your power to impede by that impeachment, unsupported, as it is, by evidence, and unfollowed by conviction. An impeachment, which though

palpably gratuitous and arbitrary, yet when presented to the undistinguishing and unreflecting minds of the majority of readers, is the more mischievous, as it is unenlivened by ingenuity or vivacity; for many will shrink from the task of detecting its fallacy, rather than undertake the labour necessary to enable them to understand it.

Had a simple wish of "submitting to Mrs. More's candid consideration the ideas that presented themselves to your mind" * been unmixed with a desire of distinguishing yourself as an author, you might fully have executed that wish by a *private letter*: and thus have avoided the apprehension, which now lights on you, that an ambition of connecting your name with those of persons of great eminence and celebrity, has led you to overlook the evil consequences to be apprehended from an inconsiderate, invidious, and unsubstantiated arraignment of the just-

* Vid. p. 11 of Mr. D's Letter to Mrs. More.

ness of their principles, and the orthodoxy
of their doctrines.

If your talents and zeal for writing demand exercise, and you cannot suppress a desire of appearing as the public champion of Religion; let me intreat you to direct your future attacks against those enemies, of whom the general welfare of the Christian Church imperiously demands the conquest. While infidelity, ungodliness, and immorality stalk the land, and bare their unblushing visage to the day; a Soldier, who is enlisted under the banner of the Captain of our Salvation can never be at a loss for opportunities of displaying his fidelity and valour. And he who will direct his vigilance aright, will not have leisure to plan or execute any attacks whose *utility is questionable*; still less, those whose *probable effect will be an injurious one*. Sorry am I to observe, that a *Senator* may outrage common decency in a licentious novel; a *soi-disant Philosopher* may scatter firebrands, arrows, and death through society; a *Doctor of Divinity* may

do his utmost to turn the Holy Scriptures into ridicule and nonsense ; and the *Arch Fiend* himself may deal out his seductions under the form of a *German dramatist*, without a remark or objection from your pen. While the pious labours of the avowed and tried friends of Religion and Virtue are made the subject of censures, *malignant in their tendency, however pure in their motives* ; and themselves called to the bar of theological criticism, for inculcating doctrines, which *their accuser himself, and the whole body which he is a member of, have solemnly pledged themselves to propagate and attest.*

And now, Sir, I bid you farewell. I have endeavoured, in this address to you, to speak sincerely and briefly. We are both entrusted with an high and holy commission, the discharge of whose duties presents so continual and forcible a claim on our time and attention, as to forbid the dedication of a considerable portion of either to any pursuit whatsoever, which does not

embrace and promote the glorious purposes
of our ministry.

The name of the person who addresses you is suppressed, from a persuasion, that no prejudice can arise to the effect of the preceding pages, by omitting to subscribe this last with the name of the writer of them; for it has not, and probably never will have the property of adding any weight to the arguments of him who bears it; and who, being contented with indulging an anxious desire that truth should, above all things, be sought after; feels no ambition to be publicly recognized as its supporter, beyond the limits of that sphere of exertion to which his professional duties confine him.

A Minister of the Church of England.

Sept. 28th, 1799.

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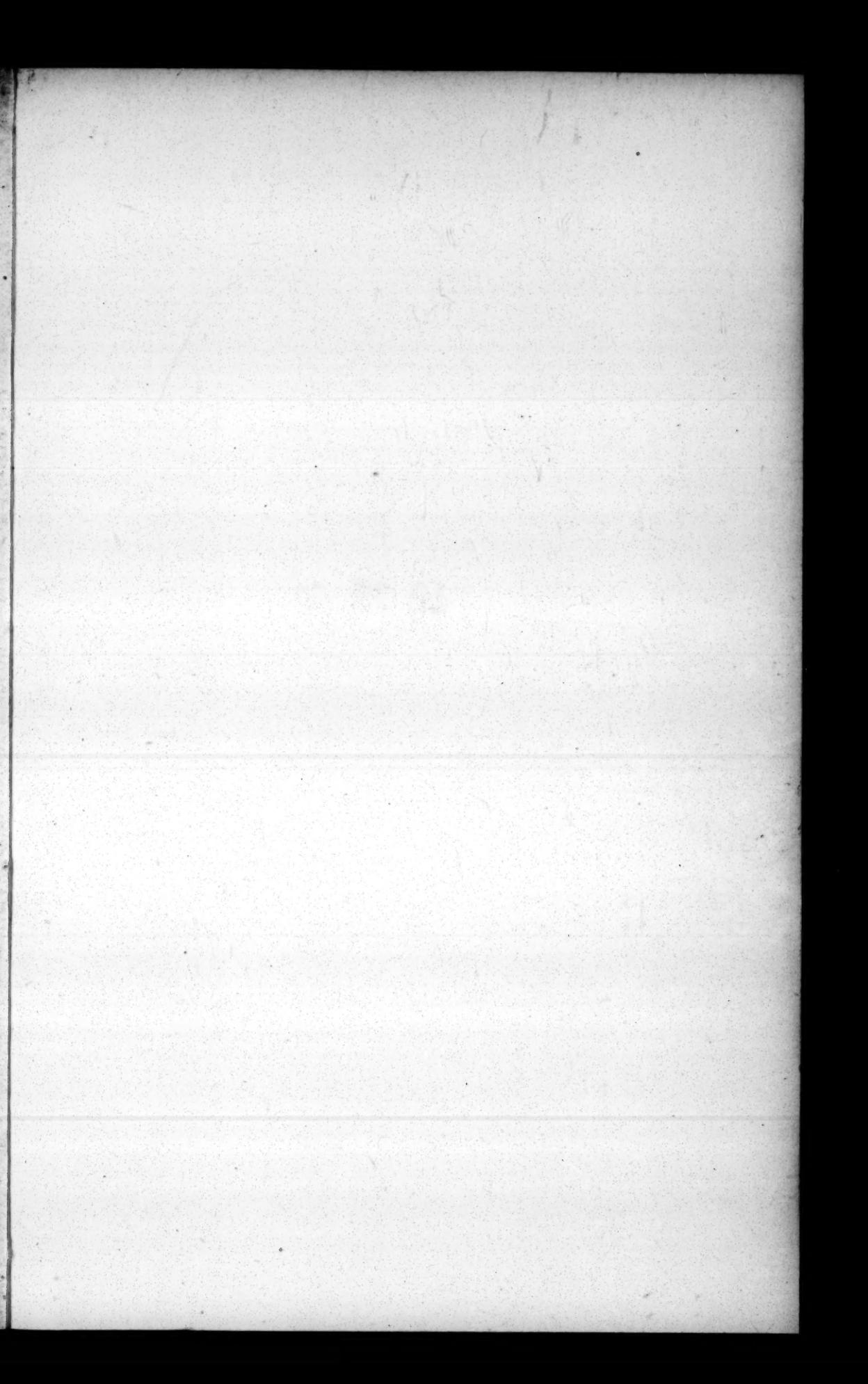
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DISCOURSE

CONCERNING THE

LAST JUDGMENT.

BY

The Reverend Mr. JOHN SING,
Late Minister of the Gospel at BRIDGNORTH,
SALOP.

L O N D O N :

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